

PROGRAM SIMPLIFICATION ADVISORY WORKGROUP
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday March 06, 2002
Dane County Job Center - Madison

Attendees: Sara Shackleton, Dane Co. Sara Pynenberg, DWS/ONSPI
Debbie Bigler, Milwaukee Co. Rick Zynda, DWS/ONSPI
Carol Amelong, DWS/ONSPI Amy Mendel-Clemens, Call Center

The following Food Stamp Program and waiver updates were discussed:

Child Support Waiver: Our waiver request to simplify child support income budgeting and change reporting was only approved in part by FNS. Modifications to the request could not be made that would have met the goal of FS Program simplification. We withdrew the waiver request and submitted another request to increase the change reporting threshold for child support income from \$25 to \$100 per month.

ABAWD Waiver: This was submitted in Jan. and if approved will exempt all ABAWDs from time-limited benefit work requirements. We were able to submit it based on several State area's increased unemployment rates, including the city of Milwaukee. FNS sets the waiver approvable criteria and 85% of Wisconsin's ABAWD population live in areas that meet this criteria. We are also allowed to exempt 15% of the ABAWD population based on any criteria that we choose. Therefore, the entire State ABAWD population is included in the waiver request. We are hoping this will be approved through March of 2003

SUA Waiver Options: FNS responded to our SUA/Universal phone standard waiver with a request for more information regarding cost neutrality. The waiver, as requested, will result in an increase of FS benefit issuance of about \$25,000 per month. We will be requesting some testing reports from Deloitte Consulting in an effort to provide an offset to this increase – perhaps by lowering one or more of the standards by a few dollars. If the cost-neutrality cannot be provided, or if FNS denies the waiver request, we will look at the possibility of creating an “electric only” standard (\$86) for those folks that do not verify that they have 2 qualifying expenses to get the LUA (\$117). We would mandate standards under this plan.

Our only other alternative at this point would be to implement a new policy by regulation – which would require that folks verify 2 expenses to get the LUA – if they only have an electric non-heating expense, they would have to claim actual. We will definitely be working on an alternative to that policy – Michigan has it now and their policy analyst has indicated that it is very complicated to administer.

IA/GR Policy for FS: Ops memo is ready for release that will implement new policy effective 04/01/02. Interim Assistance counts as a loan. Local general relief may count as income. Neither confers categorical eligibility for FS per FNS regulations.

SSI Automation – Phase II: Workgroup has just been reorganized to include more representatives from the FS Business Area. Phase II has been put on hold until this summer due to recently identified needs for correct implementation for FS.

Automated Categorical Eligibility and W2 Budgeting: CARES fix is scheduled for May. This will enhance CARES to correctly budget W2 payments in all cases including companion cases. Correct categorical eligibility determinations will also be made in CARES for companion W2 payment, W2 non-payment, and CC cases. Also all cases open for W2 non-payment and/or CC and FS will be correctly determined as categorically eligible without worker need to update the switch on ANBC.

Restructuring of Workgroup: We are exploring the possibility of merging this workgroup with the FS Error Reduction workgroup that currently meets monthly for ½ a day. Since Program Simplification and Error Reduction/Payment Accuracy are so closely associated this may be a more efficient and effective use of our ever decreasing resources. The FS Policy Advisory E-Committee has been an effective means to get immediate feedback on pending FS policy changes. Sara Shackleton discussed the need for local agency input on MA and Child Care program and policy decisions. This issue may be brought to IMAC for discussion.

FS Reauthorization Update – Rick Zynda

Rick had a hand out from APHSA on the Farm Bill update I have copies I can send if anyone would like one. Please let Annette Duffey (duffean@dwd.state.wi.us) know and she will get you a copy.

The top 5 things Wisconsin supports

1. Standard deductions
2. Immigrant issues
3. Change report
4. Shelter cap
5. \$10 million for demonstrations

John Haine and Joan Ellenbecker were absent, so we did not get MA or CC updates.

Next Meeting - TBA

Hope to see you at the FS Payment Accuracy Conference!